

# Primary School Teacher's Self-Efficacy in Handling School Bullying: A Case Study

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**Abstract**— Evidence from a number of studies suggest that teachers are not very effective when they address or deal with cases of bullying in schools, unaware, unwilling to stop bullying, and do not effectively respond to bullying. It is a responsibility of a teacher to deal with any bullying case in school, hence, it is not fair to judge or perceive a teacher as less effective or less efficacious because the development of teachers' self-efficacy in this matter could be influenced by some variables that serve as sources of efficacy among teachers. The purposes of this study were to determine the level of teachers' self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school and to determine the sources of influence (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal) that are significant predictors for each subscale of teachers' self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school. There were 992 in-service rural primary school teachers in Sarawak involved in this study. The overall mean scores for level of teacher self-efficacy (Behavioural, Cognitive, and Emotional) in handling school bullying in rural primary schools in this study was at moderate level. Based on the findings of this study, Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal had significantly predicted Behavioral Self-efficacy, Cognitive Self-efficacy and Emotional Self-efficacy in handling bullying school bullying.

**Keywords** — Self-Efficacy, Bullying, Primary School.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When a student is being bullied or feels that he/she is being bullied, it is important to inform a teacher who can help him/her. Whenever a teacher deals with bullying it is also very important for students to have teacher whom they see

as taking an active stand against bullying in terms of propagating anti bullying norms and having an efficacious approach to decreasing bullying. Every student wants an ideal class in which the teacher is perceived by the students as having a high degree of efficacy in dealing with bullying. Whenever any bullying case happens in or outside the school, teachers have to face and deal with it once they noticed about it or being informed by other parties (e.g. students, parents, admin staff, friends, etc.). Teachers must always bear in mind that whether they like it or not, as long as it is involving their students (be it the bully or victim), by right they are indirectly accountable and responsible that they have no other choice but to deal with it. Teachers play a vital role in supervised the students so that they do not hurt or bullying other students. As a teacher, students' safety is the main concern. Teachers have to make a stand that bullying is not tolerated and acceptable in classroom, schools and everywhere. Teachers have to ensure that if anyone in the school has a problem with bullying, they must report or have personal talk with the teacher. Teachers must let the students know that they can be trusted and ensure their safety. Teachers should take action immediately once witnesses case bullying in his or her presence. Besides offering protections and immediate actions, teachers are responsible in educate the students about the school bullying. If teachers are seen to be efficacious, they are likely to prevent bullying (Novick& Isaacs, 2010; Yoon, 2004). Successful teacher intervention in dealing with bullying among students rely on teachers' belief about how efficacious they will be in resolving or undertaking bullying cases or situations (Skinner et. al, 2014). The sense of responsibility of teachers to deal and prevent bullying in the classroom or in the school compound play a very important role (Olweus& Limber, 2010). There is also evidence suggesting that teachers might be less effective in

dealing with bullying among students in schools. Teachers may not aware of bullying, and even when they were judged to be aware of bullying, they did not intervene (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Thus it is no surprise that victims often perceive teachers as unable to protect those (Novick & Isaacs, 2010). One of the reasons why so many victims feel helpless following the bullying incident may well be the result of the widespread skepticism on the part of teachers and school administrators in regard to bullying and its seriousness (Ellis & Shute, 2007) and their inability or unwillingness to support and protect bully victims. Although most teachers fully understand the need to prevent bullying among students and irrefutable damage that bullying can do, some may still do not know how exactly to deal with it effectively for some reasons. Hence, it is not fair to judge or perceive a teacher as less effective or less efficacious when comes to dealing with bullying because the development of teachers' self-efficacy in this matter could be influenced by some variables that serve as sources of efficacy among teachers. Teachers may in fact respond differently in different situations or setting which indirectly affect their sources of their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying.

Even though there is no doubt that much good work has been done on addressing and dealing with bullying in schools, apparently, much remains to be done. One cannot denied that acts of bullying among students especially in primary school is still happening across the world and there is no exception for rural primary school in Sarawak as well. How rural primary school teachers deal with bullying phenomenon could be different from the one in urban or town area. While research on bullying has increased in recent years, little is known about bullying in rural areas and how teachers actually deal with it is still unclear (Smokowsky et. al, 2013). Therefore, the purposes of this study were to determine the level of teachers' self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school and to determine the sources of influence (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal) that are significant predictors for each subscale of teachers' self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school, particularly in Sarawak.

In Malaysian boarding schools, junior students are frequently victims of bullying by seniors. Bullying incidents in Malaysian boarding school is prevalent and worryingly inculcated into Malaysian boarding school culture (Dina Murad, 2013). As almost 90% of the rural primary schools

in Sarawak involved in this study are boarding primary school, and there are more boarding rural primary schools in Sarawak compared to West Malaysia plus the different geographical factor, thus, Sarawak is considered the right place to actually collecting data from the so called "rural schools". Of all thirteen states in Malaysia, Sarawak is the largest and has the most rural primary school. In rural of Sarawak, most primary schools are boarding schools due to the distance that children need to travel to attend class. Typically, the residence is on a Monday-Friday basis with return to longhouse or family home for weekend periods. Rural primary schools are often smaller school located in small towns and villages far away from major cities. Some of the rural schools in Sarawak involved in this study are located in area that can only be reached using limited access road, or even river transport systems.

### 1. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in social cognitive theory, developed by former APA president and current Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977, 1997). Social cognitive theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes.

Consistent with the general formulation of self-efficacy, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) defined teacher self-efficacy as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated." The definition and meaning of teacher

self-efficacy in this study subscribes to the one that was postulated by Gibbs (2000) which was based on Bandura's (1986, 1997) theoretical framework. As such, the important indicators of teacher capability that will be taken into account in this study would be;

- a) Behavioral self-efficacy (BSE), is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to perform specific actions to deal with specific situations, in this study, would be bullying.
- b) Cognitive self-efficacy (CSE), is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's thinking in specific situations.
- c) Emotional self-efficacy (ESE), is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's emotions in specific situations.

The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in Social Cognitive Theory, developed by former APA president and current Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977,1997). Social Cognitive Theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes. This trinity mutually impacts its members, determines what we come to believe about ourselves, and affects the choices we make and actions we take. Human beings are not the products of the environment. They are not products of their biology. Instead, human beings are products of the dynamic interplay between the external, the internal, and our current and past behavior. Central to Bandura's (1997) framework is his concept of self-efficacy. Bandura's aspirations about self-efficacy were grand, as reflected in the title of his 1977 article "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change." In this seminal work, Bandura defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). Self-efficacy beliefs were characterized as the major mediators for our behavior, and importantly, behavioral change. Self-efficacy beliefs can enhance human accomplishment and well-being in countless ways. They influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue. Individuals tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not. Unless people believe that their actions will have the desired consequences, they have little incentive to engage in those actions.

Bandura (1977, 1997) postulated that people's conceptions of their self-efficacy, regardless accurate or misjudged, are developed through four sources of influence which he termed as sources of efficacy information consisting of: (a)

mastery experience or actual experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal or social persuasion, and (d) physiological arousal or emotional state. Mastery experience is the most important determinant of self-efficacy because it provides the most authentic feedback regarding one's capabilities (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Past successes create a strong sense of efficacy perceptions particularly if they occur in the early stages of learning. However, if prior experience and success have created a strong sense of efficacy, failure is unlikely to affect self-efficacy. Therefore, the effect of failure on one's self-efficacy are also partly depended on the timing and the total pattern of experiences in which the failures occur. According to Bandura (1977, 1997), vicarious experience is the second most important which influence one's sense of efficacy. By observing and identifying oneself with efficacious models, the learner gathers information necessary to make judgment about his or her capabilities. This is especially influential in circumstances where the model is perceived to be similar to the observer or the observer has little experience in performing the task in question.

The third source that influence one's sense of efficacy is verbal or social persuasion. Verbal or social persuasion such as words of encouragement or moral support from other people regarding one's performance could have modified one's perceptions of efficacy. This means that, positive or encouraging verbal messages or social persuasion can influence someone or individual in the sense that, it exerts extra effort or demonstrates persistent behaviour necessary to succeed when facing difficult or much more challenging tasks. On the other hand, negative verbal or social persuasion can impede one's self-efficacy development if he or she receives critical feedback. Nevertheless, Bandura's (1977, 1997) opinion regarding verbal persuasion is that, it is a comparatively weak source of efficacy information. The fourth efficacy information source which also influence one's sense of efficacy is the psychological arousal or emotional state experienced by the person. If teachers have had experiences of stress and anxiety, these will have a negative effect on teachers beliefs about their capabilities as well. The human body can inform its owner of emotions that may not be evident on the surface (Bandura, 1997). Thus, sweaty palms and butterflies in the stomach serve to inform individuals of how they are doing in a mastery experience. Typically, self-efficacy is raised in a positive emotional state and lowered in a negative emotional state (Bandura, 1997). Even though all the sources of efficacy information may influence

teachers' self-efficacy, they will not necessarily solely be absorbed by the teachers. According to Bandura (1997), sources of efficacy information will become instructive only after being filtered through cognitive processes and reflective thought, whereby, information are selected, weighted, and incorporated into self-efficacy judgments.

## 2. Bullying in Primary School

Bullying is a power struggle for many students and can reflect negatively upon the classroom environment and students. Hammel (2008) states that many bullies are being bullied themselves which is why they act the way they do. Bullying among students is understood as repeated, negative acts committed by one or more students against another. These negative acts may be physical or verbal in nature, such as hitting or kicking, teasing or taunting, or they may involve indirect actions such as manipulating friendships or purposely excluding other children from activities. Implicit in this definition is an imbalance in real or perceived power between the bully and victim (James, 2010). Bullying has been defined as purposefully harming another person repeatedly over time (Olweus, 1994), power imbalance and is repeated multiple times (Kantor & Gladden, 2014), aggressive behavior, which can be either physical or psychological, performed repeatedly with a victim and aims to make them feel uncomfortable, insecure, and isolated from those around them (Khalim&Norshidah, 2007), direct actions such as stealing or damaging other learners' belongings or hurting them emotionally, name calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidating other learners (James, 2010). In other words, almost all forms of bullying are torturing, some are degrading, embarrassing and emotionally damaging.

Among the consequences of being bullied are, victims suffered from depression, have low self-esteem, anxiety, having psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, sleep or feed problems, having interpersonal difficulties, higher school absenteeism and lower academic competence (Martinez, 2014; Sudan, 2016). Bullying behavior can also lead to serious injury or even death (Wan-Salwina et al., 2014) and this is something that really worried the parents as well as the teachers especially in primary schools. Some countries internationally have reported high incidences of bullying among primary students while others show relatively low figures. James (2010) cites large-scale surveys of bullying around the world whereby Berger (2007) who report victimization rates of between 9 and 32 per cent, and bullying rates of between 3 and 27 per cent. Román and Murillo (2011) report on a large scale study conducted in

2007 by Plan International, a non-governmental organization on school violence in 49 developing and 17 developed countries. The results showed that more than half of sixth-grade primary students had been robbed, insulted or struck by peers at school during the month prior to the data collection. In Northern Ireland, McGuckin et al. (2010) state that previous research carried out in 2002 for the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) indicated that 40 per cent of primary school pupils and 30 per cent of post-primary school pupils had been bullied in the previous two months from the date of data collection.

There has been frequent reporting in the media on bullying cases that took place in Malaysia which involving primary school students and it seems that concerted efforts is very much needed in order to deal with bullying effectively, especially from the teachers and parents (Sudan, 2016). A Study conducted by Noran et al. (2004) in some public primary schools in Malaysia found that bullying among primary school students are massive and there is a serious need for the relevant parties to investigate further and plan on a long term basis to address this issue. The study also concluded that bullying among students in Malaysian primary schools are common and rampant.

As bullying among students is still one of the major social concern in many parts of the world, the recent case in Malaysia which drew anger on social media was involving a music student whereby he was brutally bullied by his former schoolmates and in relation to this case, four teenagers have been charged with murder (Mok, 2017). This case was the second in less than two weeks whereby a higher institution student died after being inhumanly bullied by his course mates and as a result they were also charged with murder (Nazlina, 2017). These two cases really spark outrage and has drawn national attention about the serious consequences of bullying particularly in Malaysia. Even though the bullies (for example, the above two cases) were teenagers, it is likely that they could have been practicing bullying behavior all these while especially when they were young and that behavior could have been prevented or modified during that time, especially at primary school level. Primary school level is the stage where bullying is more common and behavior modification is more likely to happen and attempts to stop bullying should start early in the primary school level before it become worst (Craven, et al., 2007). Evidence that children as young as primary school age engage in bullying behaviors is a clear concern for society and it is now more widely accepted that bullying appears before students actually go to secondary school, college, and university.



Some researchers (Haynie et al., 2001) do agreed that bullies are more likely to engage in more serious delinquent behaviors later in adolescence and adulthood.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive design in order to investigate primary schools' teachers self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, and establish evidence with which to determine the validity and reliability of the *Teacher Sense Of Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying* (TSEDB). The descriptive information derived from this study was then used to construct new understandings of primary school teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. This study also investigated the sources of information that contribute to the development of primary school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in dealing with bullying among students, especially in rural primary school in Sarawak. The potential sources of influence (the predictor variables) identified for this study consisted of Bandura's (1977, 1997) four sources of efficacy information (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological). The criterion variable examined is primary school teachers' sense of efficacy (behavioural self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy) regarding dealing primary school in Sarawak, Malaysia.

Initially, the investigation centered on the analysis of data generated by the TSEDB. Researchers then examined the distribution of scores, the characteristics of the scores produced by each item, the relationships between the items and the sources of self-efficacy, and the relationship between the sources of self-efficacy and the composite construct of self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

The targeted population for this study consisted of all in-service teachers currently teaching or serving in rural primary schools in Sarawak (East Malaysia). Using the *stratified random sampling* the researchers had select six divisions randomly from the population of twelve divisions in Sarawak. There were Serian division, Sri Aman division, Betong division, Mukah division, Kapit division, and Limbang division. After that, the researcher had again randomly selected 20 schools from each division. Meaning that, approximately 120 rural primary schools were supposed to be involved in this study. Based on the initial sampling design, it was expected about 1800 rural primary school teachers take part in this study, but due to budget constrains and other limitations, the number of rural primary school teachers involved in this study was 992.

Out of 120 rural primary schools targeted only 108 schools involved in this study. The actual number of teachers from each school vary and the average number of teachers involved in this study from each school is about 9 teachers (consisted of senior assistants, discipline teachers, counselling teachers, and ordinary teachers).

After testing for validity and reliability as well as the factor analysis of both instruments the revised questionnaire had been administered to the actual samples of the study. Written permission from the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, had been sought in order to collect the raw data of the study. Upon approval, consent letter was also been sought from the State Educational Director of the state involved (Sarawak). After obtaining clearance from the respective authorities, the researcher personally

went to the state and with the help from a research assistants appointed by the researcher in the state, the questionnaire had been administered to the participants (primary school teachers currently teaching in rural primary schools in the state of Sarawak, Malaysia) of this study. There were three teachers (part time research assistants) from each division helping the researcher to administer the questionnaire to the participants. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researchers as well as the three helpers took some times to explain the intent of the study to the participants. Out of 120 schools involved in this study, researchers and part time research assistants only managed to actually to go to 75 rural primary schools in all the division involved in this study. For other rural schools (33 schools) that could be reached by the researchers due to some limitations (location, time and budget), an envelope contains the questionnaires, relevant instruction, copy of letters of approval from the Ministry of Education and the State Department as well as letter from the researcher to the Head Master, and empty envelop for the school to send back the questionnaires to the District Education Department had been sent to all the District Education Department in some of the Divisions in Sarawak. The process of collecting data had been smoothly carried out by the help of appointed part time research assistants from every division involved in this study. Every District Education Department has all the schools' mail box and for some rural schools, the head masters or the clerks of the schools will collect their mail twice a week. Altogether there were 108 rural schools from six divisions in Sarawak involved in this study (Serian division : 20 schools, Sri Aman division : 20 schools, Betong division : 23 schools,

Mukahdivision : 22 schools, Kapit division : 13 schools, and Limbang : division : 10 schools).

### 1. Instrument

A questionnaire was utilized in this study in order to gather necessary data or relevant information. There were three sections in the questionnaire. **Section A** consisted of the *Sources of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying in Primary School* with 32 self-constructed items. The 32 self-constructed items regarding this matter has been developed by the researcher since there is no prior study has been done to determine the sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in primary school. The 32 items consisted of mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. These items were evaluated by two university professors who are expert in the field. There were 9 items assessed mastery experiences (e.g., “My experiences handling several bullying cases in school helped enhance my self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying”), 8 items assessed vicarious experiences (e.g., “The school administrators and teachers collaborate well in ensuring the school is run effectively and a safe place for students to study”), 9 items assessed verbal persuasion (e.g., “I received positive feedback from my headmaster or senior assistants regarding my ability in dealing with bullying case among students”), and 6 items assessed physiological arousal (e.g., “I usually not worry about my ability to deal with any bullying case in my school”). Items were both positively and negatively worded. Negatively-worded items were reverse coded prior to analysis. Thought-listing questionnaire from 250 teachers during the pilot test had been carried out. In order to response to sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy scale regarding dealing with bullying in primary school, participants were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) had also been carried out on all the variables (the questions) of to evaluate whether all the items designed to assess the sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school. A factor is a hypothetical latent variable that is measured by one or more observable variables. Such analysis can be used to reduce the number of items in a scale to produce a reliable instrument composed of items that are meaningfully related (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). Exploratory factor analysis was also appropriate because more than one latent

variable could underlie a single source of self-efficacy identified by Bandura (1997). Based on the initial investigations of the internal consistency of the *Sources Of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing With Bullying in Primary School*, the alpha values were reasonably acceptable, ranging from Cronbach’s alpha .73 to .86. Items with weak alpha values were removed. However, based on theoretical foundations, three items that were statistically weak were retained after revisiting its wordings to increase clarity and conciseness. The revised *Sources Of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing With Bullying in Primary School* consisted of 32 items.

**Section B** comprised the *Teacher Sense Of Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying*, with 18 self-constructed items (to determine the participants’ level of self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in primary school). The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) had been used as the main references in order to develop the 18 self-constructed items in the Teacher Sense Of Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying in primary school. The 18 self-constructed items in the Teacher Sense Of Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying in Primary School, actually consisted of the three sub scale of self-efficacy (Behavioral, Cognitive and Emotional) suggested by Gibbs (2000) in their study. There were 6 items assessed behavioral self-efficacy (e.g., “How confident are you in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom ?”), 6 items assessed cognitive self-efficacy (e.g., “How much can you do to express strong disapproval of bullying, that students know that you don’t condone any kind of harassment or mistreatment of others ?”), and 6 items assessed Emotional self-efficacy (e.g., “How much can you do to influence students to dare to express themselves to others that they are also the victims of bullying? ”). Items were both positively and negatively worded. In order to response to teachers self-efficacy scale regarding dealing with bullying, participants were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-nothing, 2-very little, 3-some influences, 4-Quite a bit, 5-A great deal). Thought-listing questionnaire from 250 teachers during the pilot test had been carried out. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) had also been carried out on all the variables (the questions) of self-efficacy scale on teachers’ self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. Internal consistency for each of the sub-scales was examined using Cronbach’s alpha. The alphas were moderate: .72 for Behavioral Self-Efficacy (6

items), .67 for Cognitive Self-Efficacy (6 items), and .63 for Emotional Self-Efficacy (6 items).

The last section, that is **section C**, was aimed to get several relevant demographic information of the participants. For the purpose of this study, the data obtained from section A and B were treated as interval data. Demographic information that will be obtained will be treated as nominal data.

### III. FINDINGS

#### 1. Teachers' Self-efficacy regarding Dealing with Bullying among Students in Rural Primary School, among In-service Teachers.

In Section B of the questionnaire, there are actually 18 items that measure the level of teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in rural primary school, among in-service teacher in Sarawak. Participants

responded to 18 statements (self-constructed items) on a 5-point scale ranging from 1( *nothing*) to 5 ( *a great deal*) based on judgment of their own capabilities in three criteria: (i) behavioural, (ii) cognitive and (iii) emotional. TABLE 1 displays data concerning the frequencies and percentages distributions of participants perceived level of self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school in this study. Based on the participants' mean scores ranged from minimum of 2.33 to a maximum of 5.00 on the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale in Dealing With Bullying Among Students in Primary School*, a mean score from scales 2.33 to 3.22 indicates low level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying; 3.23 to 4.12 indicates moderate level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying and 4.13 to 5.00 indicates high level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying.

*Table.1: Teacher Self-efficacy's Level Regarding Dealing with bullying Among Students in Rural Primary School: Frequency and Percentage Response on Likert Scale*

Scores Range	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
2.33 – 3.22	Low	53	5.34	2.35
3.23 – 4.12	Moderate	447	45.06	3.67
4.13 – 5.00	High	492	49.59	4.43

Overall Mean = 3.98 ( $SD = .52$ )

*Table 2: Overall Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for each Subscales of Level of Behavioural Self-efficacy (BSE), Level of Cognitive Self-efficacy (CSE), and Level of Emotional Self-efficacy (ESE,) Regarding Dealing With Bullying in Rural Primary Schools in Sarawak.*

Subscale	Level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Behavioural Self-Efficacy	Moderate	3.97	0.53
Cognitive Self-efficacy	Moderate	4.01	0.51
Emotional Self-efficacy	Moderate	3.96	0.51

Overall Mean = 3.98 ( $SD = .52$ )  $N = 992$  Cronbach's Alpha = .83

Looking at TABLE 2, all the three (Behavioural, Cognitive and Emotional self-efficacy) mean scores fell between the range of 3.96 up to 4.01. Cognitive Self-Efficacy has the highest overall mean among them all with an overall mean of 4.01 ( $SD = 0.51$ ). This is followed by Behavioural Self-efficacy with an overall mean of 3.97 ( $SD = 0.53$ ), and Emotional Self-efficacy with an overall mean of 3.96 ( $SD = 0.51$ ).

Under Behavioural Self-Efficacy there were six statements that reflected Behavioural self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school (TABLE 3). Item 8 yielded the highest mean score of 4.23 ( $SD = 0.62$ ) whereby more than three quarter (80.64%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) were most confident that they could calm any student in the school should he/she been bullied badly. Participants in this study also showed a mean score of 4.04 ( $SD=0.47$ ) for

item 12, whereby more than three quarter (79.53%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) have high confident that they could improve the self esteem of victim of bullying. For item no.1, with a mean score of 3.98 ( $SD=0.49$ ), more than three quarter (80.04%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) were most confident that they can control bullying behavior among students in the classroom in rural primary school. More than half (78.83%) of the participant in this study also showed a high confident that they are able to respond to difficult situation (e.g. suicide attempt, depression)

involving bullying in rural primary school. In terms of how well they would establish a system or a strategy in their classroom to avoid bullying among students in rural primary school, more than three quarter (83.80%) respondents showed a high confident. When asked about how much the participants can do to make the students overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident, most of them (80.64%) showed a high level of confident with a mean score of 3.67 ( $SD=0.47$ ).

Table.3:Level of Behavioural Self-efficacy (BSE) of Teachers Regarding Dealing With Bullying Among Students in Rural Primary school

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
1. How confident are you in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom ?	119 (12.00)	79 (7.96)	794 (80.04)	3.98	0.49
5. How much can you do to make the students to overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident ?	68 (6.85)	124 (12.50)	800 (80.64)	3.67	0.47
6. How well can you respond to difficult situation (e. g suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying?	112 (11.29)	98 (9.88)	782 (78.83)	4.02	0.64
8. How much can you do to calm a student who had been bullied badly ?	114 (11.49)	78 (7.86)	800 (80.64)	4.23	0.62
9. How well can you establish a system or a strategy in your classroom to avoid bullying among students ?	63 (3.18)	138 (13.02)	791 (83.80)	3.87	0.53
12. How much can you do to improve the Self-esteem of victims of bullying ?	83 (8.38)	120 (12.09)	789 (79.53)	4.04	0.47

Behavioural Self-efficacy Mean = 3.97,  $SD = 0.53$   $N = 992$  Cronbach's Alpha = .86

Cognitive self-efficacy (TABLE 4), was ranked the highest level of teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school. Item 2 and item 18 yielded mean scores of 4.69 ( $SD= 0.31$ ) and 4.56 ( $SD=0.41$ ), whereby more than eighty percent of the participants responded favorably, indicating that they can influence the students to inform them once bullying incident occurs ( 82.05 %) and get students to believe that teachers are the most reliable persons to be informed when bullying incident occurs in school (84.97%). For item 15, with a mean score of 3.99 ( $SD =0.47$ ), 75.90% of the participants ( $N=992$ ) showed a high confident that they can demonstrates to students that everyone is valued and respected in a classroom. When asked about how much can the participants do to help their students value their dignity (item 4), most of them (83.06%) showed a high confident with a mean score of 4.00 ( $SD = 0.52$ ). In terms of how much the participants can do to express strong disapproval of bullying, that students know that they don't condone any kind of harassment or mistreatment of others (item 14), more than half (75.50%) of the participants showed a high confident, with a mean score of 3.73 ( $SD = 0.74$ ). For item 10, with a mean score of 3.62 ( $SD = 0.62$ ) more than half (75.00%) of the participants showed high confident in using the variety of strategies in handling bullying cases in school.



Table 4: Level of Cognitive Self-efficacy (CSE) of Teachers Regarding Dealing with Bullying among Students in Rural Primary School

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
2. How much can you do to influence the students to inform you, once bullying incident occurs?	79 (7.96)	99 (9.97)	814 (82.05)	4.69	0.31
4. How much can you do to help your students value their dignity?	59 (5.96)	109 (10.98)	824 (83.06)	4.00	0.52
10. How much can you use the variety of strategies in handling bullying cases ?	99 (9.98)	149 (15.02)	744 (75.00)	3.62	0.62
14. How much can you do to express strong disapproval of bullying, that students know that you don't condone any kind of harassment or mistreatment of others ?	80 (8.06)	163 (16.43)	749 (75.50)	3.73	0.74
15. To what extent can you demonstrates to students that everyone is valued and respected in your classroom ?	129 (13.01)	110 (11.09)	753 (75.90)	3.99	0.47
18. How much can you do to get students to believe that teachers are the most reliable persons to be informed when bullying incident occurs in school ?	47 (4.75)	102 (10.28)	843 (84.97)	4.56	0.41

Cognitive Self-efficacy Mean = 4.01, SD = 0.51    N = 992    Cronbach's Alpha = .86

Emotional Self-Efficacy (TABLE 5). Just like Behavioural and Cognitive Self-efficacy, there were six statements that represent emotional self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. Item 7 yielded the highest mean score of 3.73 ( $SD = 0.26$ ) whereby more than three quarter (82.15%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) had a high confident that they can get the students to follow school rules. As the second highest mean score (3.71,  $SD = 0.58$ ), item 17 showed more than eighty percent (81.65%) of the participants had high confident in influencing students to dare to express themselves to others that they are also the victims of bullying. When asked about how much participants can do to make the students trust that, they are the one that they can rely on or talk to especially when they are really sad or depressed when being bullied

(item 16), most of the participants (83.66%) showed a high confident, with a mean score of 3.68 ( $SD = 0.48$ ). For item 11, with a mean score of 3.56 ( $SD = 0.71$ ), more than three quarter (81.20%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) showed a high confident in providing advise or guidance when students are being bully. More than half (60.78%) of the participants ( $N=992$ ) showed a high self-efficacy in getting the victims of bullies to cope with their frustrations, anxiety, and pain (item 3), with a mean score of 3.71 ( $SD = 0.58$ ). With a mean score of 3.34 ( $SD = 0.48$ ), majority (83.66%) of the participants of this study showed a high confident in implementing anti-bullying programs in their classrooms (item 13).

Table.5: Level of Emotional Self-efficacy (ESE) of Teachers Regarding dealing with bullying among students in Rural Primary School

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
3. To what extent can you get the victims of	111	278	603	3.51	0.68

bullies to cope with their frustrations, anxieties, and pain ?	(11.20)	(28.02)	(60.78)		
7. How much can you do to get students to follow school rules ?	106 (7.16)	815 (10.69)	3.73 (82.15)	0.26	
11. To what extent can you provide advice or guidance when students are being bullied ?	58 (5.85)	128 (12.90)	806 (81.25)	3.56	0.71
13. How well can you implement anti-bullying programs in your classroom ?	117 (11.80)	150 (15.12)	725 (73.08)	3.34	0.37
16. How much can you do to make the students trust that, you are the one that they can rely on or talk to especially when they are really sad or depressed when being bullied ?	46 (4.65)	116 (11.69)	830 (83.66)	3.68	0.48
17. How much can you do to influence students to dare to express themselves to others that they are also the victims of bullying ?	84 (8.46)	98 (9.87)	810 (81.65)	3.71	0.58
<hr/>					
Emotional Self-efficacy Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.51 N = 992 Cronbach's Alpha = .79					

## 2. Sources of influence that are significant predictors for each subscale of teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary schools in Sarawak.

In terms of direct effects of each predictor, when all the predictors variables were entered into the equation of multiple regression analysis, Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal had positive regression weight

indicates that these two variables significantly predicted Behavioral Self-Efficacy (TABLE 6). Physiological Arousal accounted for the highest effect on Behavioral Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school, with beta weight of .178 at  $p < .001$  ( $t = 4.254$ ). The second direct effect on Behavioral Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school is Verbal Persuasion, with beta weight of .155 at  $p = .001$  ( $t = 3.397$ )

Table 6: Coefficients

Predictors Variables	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	sig.
Mastery Experience	.023	.053	.019	0.426	.670
Vicarious Experience	.082	.054	.062	1.504	.133
Verbal Persuasion	.200	.059	.155	3.397	.001
Physiological Arousal	.201	.047	.178	4.254	.000

Note :N = 992,  $R^2 = .22$   $p < .001$

Dependent variable : Behavioral Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

Under Cognitive Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal also showed positive regression weight indicates that these two variables significantly predicted Cognitive Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school. As can be seen from TABLE 7, results indicate that Physiological Arousal

accounted for the highest effect on Cognitive Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school, with beta weight of .192 at  $p < .001$  ( $t = 4.560$ ). The second direct effect on Cognitive Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school is Verbal Persuasion, with beta weight of .184 at  $p = .001$  ( $t = 4.004$ )

Table 7: Coefficients

Predictors Variables	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	sig.
Mastery Experience	.056	.052	.049	1.086	.278
Vicarious Experience	.072	.053	.056	1.358	.175
Verbal Persuasion	.231	.058	.184	4.004	.000

Physiological Arousal	.210	.046	.192	4.560	.000
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Note :N = 992,  $R^2 = .21$   $p < .001$

Dependent variable : Cognitive Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

For the third subscale that is the Emotional Self-Efficacy, when all the predictors variables were entered into the equation of multiple regression analysis, Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal still showed positive regression weight indicates that these two variables significantly predicted Emotional Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school compared to Mastery Experience and Vicarious Experience.

As can be seen from TABLE 8, results indicate that Verbal Persuasion accounted for the highest effect on Emotional Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school, with beta weight of .152 at  $p \leq .001$  ( $t = 3.317$ ). The second direct effect on Emotional Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in primary school is Physiological Arousal, with beta weight of .138 at  $p \leq .001$  ( $t = 3.315$ ).

Table 8: Coefficients

Predictors Variables	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	sig.
Mastery Experience	.044	.051	.038	0.853	.394
Vicarious Experience	.131	.053	.102	2.483	.013
Verbal Persuasion	.189	.057	.151	3.317	.001
Physiological Arousal	.151	.046	.138	3.315	.001

Note :N = 992,  $R^2 = .21$   $p < .001$

Dependent variable : Emotional Self-Efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that all four sources generally contributed moderately influence on primary school teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in school, with Vicarious Experience has the highest overall mean scores. This result somewhat contradicted with Bandura's finding (1997) as well as other studies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Lee, 2015) where mastery experiences was the most important determinant of self-efficacy. Looking at the demographic information of the participant of this study, more than 50 percent of the participants had fewer than 10 years of total teaching experience. Teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience had significantly higher mean scores for mastery experiences than did less experienced teachers. This could explain why mastery experience was not the most determinant of sources of self-efficacy when come to experience dealing with bullying, in the present study. Another factor could be because of teachers themselves were reluctant or unwilling to actually get themselves involved in any bullying case or intervention and as a result they do not have the experience. As bullying behavior is not always easy to be observed or detected and students are quite accomplished at hiding it from adults (Cross, 2006), not all teachers actually have the experience dealing with bullying. On the other hand,

Bandura (1997) did emphasized that self-efficacy arose not only from mastery experience (or other efficacy sources) but also from continuous cognitive and metacognitive processing of relevant information around them.

In terms of direct effects of each predictor variable (Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experience, Verbal Persuasion, and Physiological Arousal) on each subscale (Behavioral Self-Efficacy, Cognitive Self-Efficacy, and Emotional Self-Efficacy) of teachers self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal had consistently showed significantly positive regression weight for all the three subscales.

Even though Bandura (1997) viewed Verbal Persuasion as a comparatively weak sources of efficacy information, he also again noted that if persuaders are important significant others in one's life, they can play an important parts in the development of self-efficacy. In this study, among family members, friends, Headmaster, other teachers, students and teachers' lecturer when they were in teacher's training college or university; verbal persuasion received from Headmaster or Senior Assistants regarding teacher's ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school, has the strongest influence among all verbal persuasions. Besides that, most of the teachers' parents or their spouses are supportive whenever they talked or discuss their problem with them, especially regarding

bullying phenomena in their school. The results of this study indicate that the rural primary school teachers in this study received positive feedback from their colleagues regarding their ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school. People whom they know also often encourage them to become a responsible and dedicated person especially when dealing with students' problems. Verbal or social persuasion such as words of encouragement or moral support from other people regarding one's performance could have modified one's perceptions of efficacy. This means that, positive or encouraging verbal messages or social persuasion can influence someone or individual in the sense that, it exerts extra effort or demonstrates persistent behaviour necessary to succeed when facing difficult or much more challenging tasks.

This finding also in away reflected the importance of positive performance feedback and encouragement especially from evaluators who were viewed as competent, important and have authority or power. Given this situation, it is especially crucial that school principals and colleagues with higher positions (e. g heads of departments) or even parents, should pay more attention or focus on constructive feedback highlighting some of the teachers capabilities in terms of dealing with bullying cases among students in the schools. A supportive social system whereby meaningful interactions and positive gestures will definitely leave lasting impressions, in away urging as well as influence in-service teachers to put in extra effort when carrying out their duty as teachers in combating the nonstop bullying cases among students especially in rural primary schools.

As Physiological arousal also had consistently showed significantly positive regression weight for behavioral self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, this again indirectly telling us that this element should be taken into account more seriously by relevant parties or authorities when come to teachers emotional state. Teachers performance in term of dealing with bullying in rural primary school could be associated with their perceived failure with aversive physiological arousal and success with pleasant feeling states. Thus, when they become aware of unpleasant physiological arousal, they are more likely to doubt their own competence than when their physiological state were pleasant or neutral. Likewise, comfortable physiological sensations are likely to lead them to feel confident in their ability in dealing with any situation or task at hand. In terms of physiological arousal, large majority of the

participants of this study have sense of confidence in approaching and dealing with various problems of bullying cases among students in their respective school. Results of this study shows that most of the respondents were not worried whenever they were dealing with bullying cases among students. Results from the data collected in terms of physiological arousal also revealed that most of the participants of this study feel very proud and happy that they realized that they had done something good once they managed to settle any bullying case among students. This shows that the emotional states' of most the participants in this study when they were dealing with any bullying case among students, were positive. This positive emotional state actually in away raised their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. According to Bandura (1997), typically, self-efficacy is raised in a positive emotional state and on the other hand, lowered in a negative emotional state.

When dealing with difficult bullying case, almost half of participants had clear mind and were able to think clearly or rationally. This suggesting that attributes "mind" and "think clearly" can be considered as a prevalent physiological arousal factor affecting teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school. In this study, the arousal state among in-service rural primary school teachers received moderately high overall mean of 3.71, and this has kept them feeling enthusiastic as they dealing with any bullying cases among students in rural primary schools. Most of the respondents of this study also have the feeling of enthusiastic whenever they were dealing with bullying cases among students. This suggests that the moderately high level of physiological arousal has impacted positively on teachers sense of efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary schools in Sarawak.

In the present study, regardless of the three sub scale (behavioral, cognitive, and emotional) almost half the participants (49.59%) were reported to fall into the high sense of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in rural primary school in Sarawak, category (4.13 – 5.00). This suggests that half of the in-service teachers were very confidence of themselves in having the ability to successfully perform their duty or responsibility in dealing with bullying cases among students in rural primary school in Sarawak. The overall mean score was 4.43, with a standard deviation of .52, which indicated moderately high level of rural primary school teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. This can be considered a healthy level for our in-

service teachers. Perhaps in-service teachers in the presents study, with some of them armed with a basic university degree, in-house training, with at least three years of experience as a teacher and their mean age of 38 years, are more likely to exhibit higher degree of confidence and maturity in facing any challenges regarding disciplinary problems created by students.

This result (moderately high level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students) also proved that teachers in the present study are more confidence and know what to do or what they are doing whenever they are facing bullying cases among students. This also in a way had defended the accusation that had been made by some students and parents that, teachers are lack of confidence in managing bullying cases among students as well as perceive teachers as unable to protect them (Novick& Isaacs, 2010). In the year 1997, Boulton reported that most teachers, although concerned about bullying, lack the confidence in managing it. One of the reasons why so many victims feel helpless following the bullying incident may well be the result of the widespread skepticism on the part of teachers and school administrators in regard to bullying and its seriousness (Ellis & Shute, 2007) Perhaps, findings made by some researchers a few years back when they touched on the lack of ability of teachers in dealing with bullying (Atlas &Pepler, 1998; Olweus, 1993; Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson, & Power, 1999; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002) had in a way alerted the teachers community, Headmasters, teacher educators, and other authorities concerned, that something need to be done about it. Looking at the results of the present study regarding teachers' level of self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, it seems that all the efforts such as in-house training, courses, and other activities, put up for teachers are worthwhile.

Bandura (1986, 1997) pointed out clearly that self-efficacy may be most malleable or easily influenced during the early years of teaching. Bear in mind that the participants of this study are in-service teachers with at least three years of experience and there could be some factors that contributed to the changes (up or down) of teachers self-efficacy, and this could happen. Although not a focus of this study, it is imperative to look beyond their early year as a trained teacher and into the second, third, fourth, and so on, of experience handling or facing students with disciplinary problems, especially bullying. Even though not merely dealing with bullying but related to self-efficacy of teachers, Woolfolk Hoy (2000) conducted a study on the changes of teacher self-efficacy during the early years

of teaching. The researcher used three measures of teacher self-efficacy (*Gibson &Dembo Short Form*, *Bandura's Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale* and *OSU Teaching Confidence Scale*) to look at the development of teacher self-efficacy at different stages of teacher development: beginning of teacher preparation, after students teaching and after students first year of teaching. Results from the three measures revealed similar patterns in the changes in teachers self-efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy rose after completing student teaching but fell after a year of teaching as an employed teacher or trained teacher. In another research, Knobloch (2002) explored the effects caused by the first ten weeks of the school year on teacher self-efficacy revealed similar patterns in the changes on teacher self-efficacy. The researcher measured the initial teacher self-efficacy and final teacher self-efficacy (after ten weeks) of students teachers and novice teacher (first year, second year, and third year into teaching) using the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale* (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Students teachers reported the highest final teacher self-efficacy scores (7.03) and the largest change (+ .11) at the time of posttest. Novice teachers reported a drop in teacher self-efficacy level after ten weeks into the school year, at a decreasing rate: first-year teachers (- .29), second-year teachers (- .13), and third-year teachers (- .06). The first year novice teachers had the lowest teacher self-efficacy level (6.55) but rose gradually for those in second and third year of teaching. This may also be reasonable explanation for the moderately high level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, among the participants in the present study.

Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) pointed out that pre-service and newly appointed teachers often underestimated the complexity of the teaching task and their own ability to manage different agendas simultaneously. After their first year or second year of teaching, they became disappointed with the gap between the standards they have set for themselves and their own performance, resulting in lower level of teaching efficacy to meet the realities of teaching. Knobloch (2002) concluded that the work environment of isolation, incessant demands, psychological dilemmas and frustrations, and inadequate induction could have contributed to the decline of teacher self-efficacy for first year teachers. Additionally, Woolfolk and Hoy (2000) found that changes in teacher self-efficacy during the first year of teaching were positively related to participants' satisfaction with their professional performance and their



perception of support available (by the administration, colleagues, parents, community and other resources).

Based on the overall mean scores which indicated moderately high level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, among the participants in this study, with half of them were reported to fall into the high sense of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, it is evident that teachers in the present study appeared to have magnified perception of their ability to deal with bullying cases among students in their respective rural primary schools. It is possible that in-service teachers in the present study were mostly working or in a conducive, supportive, and under controlled environment. Such environments may have boosted their self-efficacy in dealing with any problem caused by the students especially the problem of bullying among them. Britner and Pajares (2001) had advised against attempts to lower the strength of a person's self-belief to a more "realistic" level. This is because teachers who believe that they can be successful on a given task are more likely to be so by adopting challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite setbacks and develop coping mechanism for managing their emotional states. Therefore in order to sustain the existing high level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, focus should be given to nourish and encourage more professional development, physiological coping and establishing a social support system in the school organization.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, with more and better training opportunities that provide the right and useful sources of self-efficacy and clearly articulated whole school policies and intervention programs, teachers will be more or well equipped to face the challenges of bullying phenomena in the future. As Verbal Persuasion and Physiological Arousal had consistently showed significantly positive regression weight for all the three subscales in this particular study, this showed that positive or encouraging verbal messages or social persuasion can influence someone or individual in the sense that, it exerts extra effort or demonstrates persistent behaviour necessary to succeed when facing difficult or much more challenging tasks, in this case, dealing with bullying among students in primary school. High level of physiological arousal is essential because it could impacted positively on teachers sense of efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

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